NOVEMBER, 1954
Vol. 9 No. 11
New South

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An Official Progress Report

Integration in the Armed Services

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DURING recent years, the Armed Forces have continuously and vigorously implemented principles of equality of opportunity and treatment for Negro personnel. There has been a conscientious endeavor to carry forward the principles laid down by the President of the United States and the Secretary of Defense for the most effective utilization of all military manpower. Policies have been reviewed and modified, as experience warranted, with a view to developing a broader base of trained personnel, both officer and enlisted, than existed in the past. . . .

PRINCIPLE AND PRACTICE

A clear enunciation of the position of the Department is found in a radio broadcast on 17 February 1954, when Dr. John A. Hannah, then Assistant Secretary of Defense (Manpower and Personnel), made the following statement: "The obligations to defend our country and our beliefs are borne equally by all of our citizens without regard to race or color or religion . . . we believe in the essential dignity of every human being, and that, within certain limits necessary to maintain an orderly society, each individual should have an opportunity to determine the course and patterns of his existence. . . . It should be a real gratification to all thinking Americans to know that our Armed Forces are leading the way in demonstrating both at home and abroad that America provides opportunities for all of her people. . . . In spite of all predictions to the contrary, I have yet to find a field commander in any service that has anything but commendation for complete racial integration. . . ."

SCHOOLS

Evidence of the extent of the concern on the part of the Department is found in connection with schools for the children of personnel stationed at military installations. Without any formal directive to the effect, several schools for dependents located on Government property in a number of states had been operating for some time without incident on an integrated basis. As the question of integration in schools received further and widespread attention, it was determined that all such schools operated by the military would begin operation on an integrated basis with the beginning of the 1953 fall term, and

this policy was carried out on schedule.

There remained questions concerning schools located on military installations, but operated on a segregated basis by local educational agencies. Policies on this problem were finalized on 12 January 1954, when the Secretary of Defense directed "that the operation of all school facilities located on military installations shall be conducted without segregation on the basis of race or color," regardless of other considerations. It was stipulated that this policy would be placed into effect "as soon as practicable, and under no circumstances later than September 1, 1955." In connection with the promulgation of this directive, Secretary of Defense Charles E. Wilson stated, "We hope all interested parties and all local communities will cooperate." It will be noted that the Supreme Court decision against segregation in public education followed four months later.

AIR FORCE TECHNICAL TRAINING

The Air Force has accumulated considerable experience on integration in training as a result of a policy decision made in connection with technical training contracts for Air Force personnel with schools in States having segregation laws. This policy was to the effect that "The Air Force will let contracts for technical training in civilian schools in accordance with the effectiveness of the service that the school can render to the Air Force. When airmen are to be sent to schools in States having statutes requiring segregation, Negro airmen will be given the option of not going if they choose. In that event, the Negro airman will be sent to a school which can accept both white and Negro airmen."

NAVY RECRUIT TRAINING

Traditionally, there has been a concentration of Negro personnel in the stewards branch of the Navy. A significant step was taken toward changing this situation when the Department of the Navy announced on 1 March 1954, that separate recruitment of stewards was being abolished. The effect of this policy is to give all seamen recruits an equal opportunity to qualify and apply for service in any of the Navy's specialty groups at the end of recruit training. While it is realized that the present racial concentration will not be immediately dissolved under this new program, Negro recruits are now assured of the opportunity, as all others, to choose their branch of service on the basis of recruit orientation, testing, and training.

ARMY ORDERS

The Department of the Army, in regulations issued on 23 April 1954, directed the omission of racial designations in orders covering the reassignment of members between Army Reserve units. This directive will facilitate the participation of Negro personnel in Army Reserve activities on the same basis as that now obtaining for personnel on active duty. As the matter of the Reserve forces continues to receive consideration at all levels, every step taken to increase participation therein is in the interest of national defense and solidarity. . . .

CIVILIAN EMPLOYEES

The Secretary of the Navy, on 20 August 1953, directed the complete elimination of all barriers to the free use of previously segregated facilities on Government-owned Shore Stations of the Navy. Despite evidences of objections to thus modifying racial

customs of long standing in some sections, effective negotiations and follow-up brought about full implementation of this directive well ahead of the schedule initially outlined.

Concurrently, similar moves were carried out by the Army and the Air Force with a minimum of publicity and no untoward incidents. This action advanced equity of treatment for civilian employees toward a status already attained by personnel in uniform.

DEFENSE CONTRACTS

In a directive issued 11 June 1954, the Secretary of Defense provided for a program to familiarize contracting officers, contract administrators, and other personnel dealing with procurement with "the spirit, intent, and requirements of the President's policy" of non-discrimination with respect to Government contracts.

Through this program, the Army, Navy, and Air Force, in addition to the immediate procurement objectives, conduct educational programs to impress upon their contractors their own responsibilities regarding non-discrimination.

THE ARMED FORCES

For the Armed Forces, 30 June 1954 was earlier agreed upon as the time limit for the termination of any remaining all-Negro units in the services. The program proceeded ahead of schedule, so that at the above date the often-asked question about Negro units within the program of integration had become one of mere definition.

There are no longer any all-Negro units in the Services. The few Army units still carrying racial designations in the records include a considerable proportion of non-Negro personnel. Where a small unit may be found containing only Negro personnel, the condition is transient. Where concentrations are encountered, as in the case of Navy stewards, formal barriers do not any longer prevent the transfer of the individual as an individual and without regard to race.

In a positive direction, the abolition of racial quotas for Service school selection and the subsequent selection, training, and assignment without regard to race or color have resulted in more than doubling the number of Negro officers and enlisted men in attendance at these schools. . . .

PROPORTIONS

Contrary to earlier predictions, removal of racial quotas and other restrictions has not resulted in any imbalance of ratios of Negro personnel in the Services. Moreover, additional opportunities in the Services for training and assignment on the basis of individual merit have resulted in a definite increase in the number of Negro officers.

The following percentages of Negro personnel against total personnel in the military Services over a recent period give significant evidence:

	1 July 1949	1 July 1954
Army Officers	1.8 %	2.97%
Army Enlisted Men	12.4 %	13.7 %
Navy Officers	.0 %	0.1 %
Navy Enlisted Men	4.7 %	3.6 %
Air Force Officers	.56%	1.6 %
Air Force Enlisted Men	5.06%	8.6 %
Marine Corps Officers	.0 %	0.1 %
Marine Corps Enlisted Men	2.08%	6.9 %

The Department of Defense maintains no racial statistics. However, the data upon which the above summary is based are believed to be sufficiently valid and comparable for present purposes. This summary is of further significance in that current policies for eliminating racial designations will make it increasingly difficult to compile such comparative

data in the future.

ASSIGNMENT

The accelerated impetus of the program of racial integration in the Armed Forces during the post-war years has given Negro personnel the opportunity to demonstrate their skill and ability without limitations imposed by race. Better utilization has improved Service effectiveness.

While it may be too early in the program to find full equity as regards proportional inclusion and assignment of functions, many Negroes in uniform are now holding responsible and important positions on a fully integrated basis. . . .

CIVILIAN EMPLOYEES

It is the established policy of the Department that there shall be no discrimination among its Civil Service employees because of race, sex, color, or religion. Fair practices officers are assigned in all areas to further the implementation of this policy.

Even so, the utilization of the individual Negro employee at his maximum potential often appears as a distant objective. This is particularly true of women employees. A continuous evaluation of the impeding factors in this situation is being made, and progress has been noted. However, as compared with other Government employees, or as measured against the Negro in military uniform, much remains to be done to accomplish full equity as regards testing, selection, orientation, training, assignment, guidance, and advancement, not to mention full recognition and reward on the basis of service rendered.

The situation is not resolved by pointing out that conditions are not measurably better elsewhere, except in the uniform of the Armed Forces. The future rests upon the educational efforts under the fair employment practices program of the Department and the Military Services.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Community customs and mores in regard to race vary in different parts of the Nation and of the world. It is paradoxical that the Negro citizen in uniform has frequently been made to feel more at home overseas than in his home town.

These matters are largely beyond the direct purview of the Department of Defense. Even so, marked progress is being made in clarifying civilian-military relationships off duty and off post. While this work is still in its beginning, achievements to date in replacing controversy with cooperative effort reflect great credit upon the commands immediately concerned.

OTHER PROBLEM AREAS

The program of equity of opportunity for all personnel, military and civilian, is based on the concept of obtaining maximum effectiveness in the defense effort through full utilization of the maximum potential of every individual. Anything less is wasteful, especially in view of threats to our national security, besides being contrary to the basic tenets of our government.

In military areas, promising improvements of considerable scope are possible in the Reserve Officer Training Programs, the Reserve Forces, and the National Guard as well as in the further routine advancement of qualified officers now on duty.

Negro officers on active duty with the rank of brigadier general are indicated, by the criteria for this rank, in the not-too-distant future in both the Army and the Air Force. Advance-

ment here should be routine.

The civilian employee situation should be measurably improved to the benefit of the Department and all concerned, including the taxpayer.

The Military Services will help themselves and the Nation as a whole in advancing further the promising developments in cooperative relationships with the civilian community. Failure in their effort will create problems almost without end, as we strive to maintain in a ready state at home larger military forces than ever before stationed among the civilian communities in time of peace.

Racial factors here may be large and variable. They may become dominant as improvements on the military post bring into sharper contrast conditions off the post. Civilian prerogatives having priority, cooperation and coordination are everywhere indicated. Housing, transportation, family life, education, and recreation are examples of community-related areas which impinge directly and forcefully upon military proficiency. . . .

IN SUMMARY

The Negro citizen in the Armed Forces is now utilized on the basis of individual merit and proficiency in meeting the needs of the Services.

Throughout the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps, fully integrated units have replaced the all-Negro units which, until recent years, formed the only channel of military service for Negro enlistees and draftees.

Thorough evaluation of the battle-tested results to date indicates a marked increase in overall combat effectiveness through integration.

Economies in manpower, material, and money have resulted from the elimination of racially duplicated facilities and operations.

The program has advanced more rapidly than had been considered possible in some quarters, and there have been no untoward incidents.

The implementation of policies providing for opportunity among civilian employees lags far behind as compared with Armed Forces integration.

The ROTC, the National Guard, and other civilian components pose complex problems involving some major factors which are beyond military control.

Community relations as regard race are greatly improved, but much remains to be done to harmoniously effect equality of treatment for Negro service personnel.

The Armed Forces, within their own sphere, have developed notable examples of racial coordination and integration in housing, transportation, schooling, recreation, and other aspects of community life for service personnel and their families.

Segregation has been eliminated in facilities for civilian employees.

All service schools and training programs are open without racial restrictions. Already, there are tangible returns in officer promotions and in an increasing supply of technically trained specialists.

Policies and programs currently in effect give promise of further resolving many of the perplexing problems which center around situations where race is a factor.

The impact, national and international, of the advances under the program of integration in the Armed Services has been distinctly and forcefully in support of the policy of the American Government.

A MILESTONE IN THE QUEST FOR DEMOCRACY

WE, A GROUP of Negro educators, representing fourteen Southern states and the District of Columbia, have assembled here in Hot Springs, Arkansas, to express our collective point of view with respect to the Supreme Court's decision, May 17, 1954, declaring segregation in the public schools unconstitutional. We believe that by virtue of the position which we occupy in American life, we are obligated to express our views.

We welcome the decision and look upon it as another milestone in the nation's quest for a democratic way of life and in the Negro's long struggle to become a first class citizen.

The Supreme Court's decision is a part of an evolutionary process which has been going on in the South and in the Nation for a long time. The decision was not a sudden leap out of the American tradition. It was the right and moral thing to do. Moreover, it was a next logical and inevitable step in the context of our democratic development. The movement toward full democracy has resulted in the abolition of segregation in interstate travel, equalization of teachers' salaries in most areas in the South, the matriculation of Negroes in Southern universities, and the integration of Negroes and whites in all of the armed forces.

We hail the decision again because it dramatically distinguishes our way of life in a democracy from that in such totalitarian countries as Nazi Germany and Communist Russia. Here in the United States great social wrongs can be and are righted without bloodshed and without revolutionary means . . . because we have a Constitution which guarantees equality and justice to all and a body of citizens who are committed to the ideal of human brotherhood.

This thoughtful statement on the Supreme Court's school decision was adopted by sixty Southern Negro educators meeting at Hot Springs, Arkansas, October 27, under the sponsorship of the Phelps-Stokes Fund. Among the signers were the presidents and other representatives of the land-grant and private Negro colleges of the South.

NEGROES AND THE CONSTITUTION

The Constitution is our sovereign authority. To evade or discredit it is to destroy our government. Negro Americans have never given way to despair nor have they sought relief from injustices by following after the false promises of Communism. Their past accomplishments and their planned hopes for the future lie in the American ideal — "justice and equality for all." We take pride in the fact that every individual and organizational effort we have made to achieve complete citizenship rights in American life has been within the legal framework of the Federal Constitution. The preamble of the Constitution and the ideals and principles of Negro citizenship have been identical. We have never had to apologize for unwillingness or inability to adopt or support its principles.

The Supreme Court was not dealing solely with a local issue or with the issue of whether Negro and white children should attend the same public school. World leadership has been thrust upon the United States. It became America's responsibility before and after World War II not only to fight against racism and aggression, but to defend democracy in the free world. America's leadership in the world and not alone the citizenship of fifteen million Negroes was at stake. The Nation cannot consistently stand as leader of the democratic forces of the world and harbor the undemocratic practice of racial segregation at home.

Southern people have accepted previous decisions of the Supreme Court and the social changes resulting therefrom, such decisions as the abolition of the white primary, and the admission of Negroes to white universities. We believe that the South will likewise accept the decision of May 17. We gladly note that integration in public schools involving both students and teachers is already working well in some schools of the South. We are heartened by the expressions of the Southern Press speaking favorably of the decision, and by the fact that several church bodies and a number of church men and women in the South are on record as approving it.

Even before the Supreme Court handed down this decision, some Southern educational institutions, Protestant and Catholic, public and private, had opened their doors to Negroes. It is our hope that all of the colleges and universities of the South, Negro and white, will immediately implement the spirit of the Court's decision by accepting, irrespective of race, all qualified students who seek admission.

It is most unfortunate that preoccupation with the co-educational implication of the decision has obscured the question of the quality of education for all children. In two-thirds of the United States, co-education of the races has been going on for many decades with no untoward effect. There need be no ill effect in the South.

ECONOMIC THREATS

The effort on the part of some leaders and some school officials to intimidate Negro teachers and other citizens under threat of loss of jobs if they express approval of the Court's decision and if segregation is not maintained is shortsighted, vindictive, and contrary to the fundamental sense of fair play of the American people.

Negro educators should not and cannot afford to be a party to any plan designed to nullify the Court's decision. To do this would be tantamount to sharing in a plan to destroy the very fabric of our Constitutional Government. We regret that some public officials have sought to persuade Negro educators and other leaders to evade the decision by agreeing to voluntary segregation. This cannot be decently done; and such persons who agree to this will not be respected even by the officials seeking such commitment or compromise of principle.

Good statesmanship in a democracy requires that all segments of the population participate in the implementation of the Court's decision, which is of common concern. The idea is still too prevalent that the issues involved can be resolved without Negro participation. Some public officials speak as if only white Americans are involved. We are all, Negro and white, deeply and equally involved. Many Negroes can contribute sound, intelligent, and statesmanlike techniques for the handling of the inevitable issues. Negroes are able and willing to serve on boards of education, on other policy-making bodies, and in administrative capacities throughout the South. They are anxious to share the responsibilities which in too many instances have been monopolized by one segment of the population.

GOOD FAITH AND COOPERATION

We urge that immediate steps be taken to implement the decision. We are aware of the fact that it will be more difficult in some places than in others and that the time span of implementation may vary. However, there should be the cooperative effort in every community to plan on the local level the implementation of the decision. But the planning should be done in good faith and with an honest desire to implement the decision rather than scheming to circumvent it.

The action of adults who incite students to riot or encourage them to demonstrate in opposition to unsegregated schools is to be strongly condemned. Negro and white children have played together in the South for decades upon decades. They have no innate antipathy toward each other.

The Court's decision makes possible a single school system with the opportunity for the people in the region to marshal their educational resources and to develop a philosophy that brings to education generally a new perspective, and to the nation a new spirit. This cannot be done in a dual system of education. Let it be clearly

Howard W. Odum

Whereas Howard W. Odum, the profoundest student of Southern life and its most illuminating teacher, has been taken from us,

And whereas Dr. Odum was one of the principal organizers and the first President of the Southern Regional Council,

Now therefore we who continue in the Southern Regional Council resolve to follow with renewed vigor the broad humanitarian goals which were Howard Odum's goals for the South.

—Adopted by the Southern Regional Council, in annual meeting, November 10, 1954.

understood that we are not pleading for Negroes alone. We are concerned about the best education that can be made available to every child in the South. In our concern for equal and improved educational opportunities for every Southern child, we do not overlook the strenuous economic effort required. We are aware of the South's responsibility for providing funds needed to raise the level of educational opportunity for every Southern child. We, therefore, strongly endorse and support federal aid to education in order that the per capita expenditure in the South may be brought up to a high national average.

We want the white child to have the best and we want the Negro child to have the best. It is the opinion of the Supreme Court that there cannot be equality of educational opportunity for the Negro child in a segregated system. Moreover, it is the opinion of the social scientists that it is not possible for the white child to receive the best education in a segregated system.

Ours is a common democracy in which the weakest and the strongest, the most privileged and the most disadvantaged, the descendants of every race and every nation can share and happily boast that we are proud to be Americans. Children educated from the beginning in such a system will insure for us all a future of which we can be as proud as of the abolition of slavery and child labor, woman suffrage, equal educational opportunities for women, and the institution of the public schools themselves.

Time will prove that our fears have no foundation in fact just as has been proved by the implementation of previous Court decisions. Segregation breeds fear; and when the barriers of segregation are at last removed from American life, we will wonder why we feared at all. We, therefore, call upon the people of the South and the nation to strive with good will and honest intent to implement the Court's decision. It is our firm and unanimous belief that the implementation of the decision will strengthen the South and the Nation morally, economically, and spiritually. We as Negro citizens stand ready to cooperate wholeheartedly in the progressive fulfillment of these democratic objectives.

Contributions to the Southern Regional Council are tax-exempt.

NEW SOUTH

Published by
SOUTHERN REGIONAL COUNCIL
63 Auburn Avenue, N. E.
Atlanta 3, Georgia

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Subscription rate ..... $1.50 a year

ATLANTA, GEORGIA, NOVEMBER, 1954

To attain through research and action programs the ideals and practices of equal opportunity for all peoples in the region.